

Compatibility Determination

Use: Youth Deer Hunt

Refuge Name: Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority(ies): **A**for use as an inviolate sanctuary, **V**for any other management purposes, **V**for migratory birds. **@**Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 712d).

Afor use and administration under applicable laws as a refuge for migratory birds and other wildlife **V****@**Secretarial order 2843, dated November 17, 1959.

The Refuge Recreation Act (16 U.S.C. 460-1) states that each refuge is:

Asuitable for fish and wildlife oriented recreational development, the protection of natural resources, and the conservation of endangered and threatened species. **@**

Refuge Purpose(s): "...the conservation of wetlands of the Nation in order to maintain the public benefits they provide and to help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions..."

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission:

The mission of the System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Description of Use: To allow limited participation of youth hunting at Buffalo Lake NWR using restricted methods such as: assigning youth hunters through lottery draws; allowing only certain species to be hunted; limiting to certain firearms; allowing hunting on limited days; and/or limiting tracts or time periods of Big Game hunting. This hunting program is designed to contribute to, or be compatible with, Refuge objectives. It will provide a recreational experience to the general public and the opportunity to utilize a renewable resource. It could also maintain some wildlife populations at managed levels. The seasons, species, and bag limits will be within the framework of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) regular state seasons and further regulated by Refuge regulations according to Fish and Wildlife Service policy. Refuge management goals and objectives may require occasional modifications to the hunting program as harvest data, public use pressure, and Refuge programs, are developed

Availability of Resources: . As currently proposed, it is estimated that Refuge costs would be a \$10,000 initially and about \$6,000 per year thereafter, for Big Game hunting, program implementation, facility maintenance, and compliance checks. Under this Alternative, we will

rely on Texas Parks and Wildlife for law enforcement and the local special agent located in Lubbock

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Historically, Big Game hunting has been part of the culture throughout most of Texas. We are also proposing to limit the number of hunters and hunting days to ensure a quality hunt. Although hunting activities may cause minor disturbances to other wildlife, the negative effects of regulated hunting will be minimized through management options. A Section 7 Consultation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 was completed to ensure that no federally listed endangered or threatened species are at risk.

Public Review and Comment:

Determination (check one below):

☐ Use is Not Compatible

☒ Use is Compatible with Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility:

Hunting of deer is permitted on designated areas of the refuge subject to the following conditions:

- (a) Public access and hunting permits and all applicable state licenses are required.
- (b) Hunting is permitted by shotgun or muzzle loader as regulated by specific areas and refuge seasons.
- (c) Bagged game must be legally tagged and taken to the refuge check station.
- (d) Use of all-terrain-vehicles (ATV) is prohibited.
- (e) Use of horses is prohibited.
- (f) Hunting will be permitted by youths 12 to the age of 16 that have satisfactorily passed a state hunters safety course. Hunters must be between these ages at time of hunt. A sponsor 21 years of age or older is required to accompany hunter.
- (g) Tree stands or any devices such as nails, tacks, and scalping, used to climb trees or construct of blinds in trees is strictly prohibited. Use of tripod types of blinds or other elevating blinds are prohibited
- (h) Hunters and their sponsors will be required to wear a minimum of 144 square inches of blaze orange.

- (i) Scouting is permitted by foot up to three days prior to the hunt. Hunters intending on scouting must contact the refuge headquarters before scouting. Scouting is only allowed during regular refuge hours between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm CST.

Justification:

Signature: Refuge Manager _____
(Signature and Date)

Concurrence: Regional Chief _____
(Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-Evaluation Date: _____

DRAFT